

Sierra Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 4

Winter 1988

KING'S QUEST IV ARRIVES!



by Jerry Albright

Get ready for the most spectacular King's Quest ever, three times larger than any previous Sierra adventure, as King's

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Quest IV has arrived for MS-DOS based computers. King's Quest IV sets a landmark in computer gaming with a new development system that transcends existing standards of computer graphics, sound and animation.

Powerfully dramatic, King's Quest IV evokes emotion like no other computer game with unique combinations of lifelike animated personalities, beautiful landscapes, and soul-stirring music. Sierra has recreated the universe of King's Quest to build a world that one moment will pull at your heartstrings, the next moment place terror in your heart.

Uniting the best programmers, artists, and musicians in the industry, Sierra has refined its legendary 3-D animation system to create a constantly evolving universe

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Williams!

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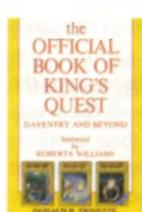
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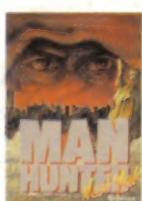
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The Official Book of
King's Quest--A First
Look!

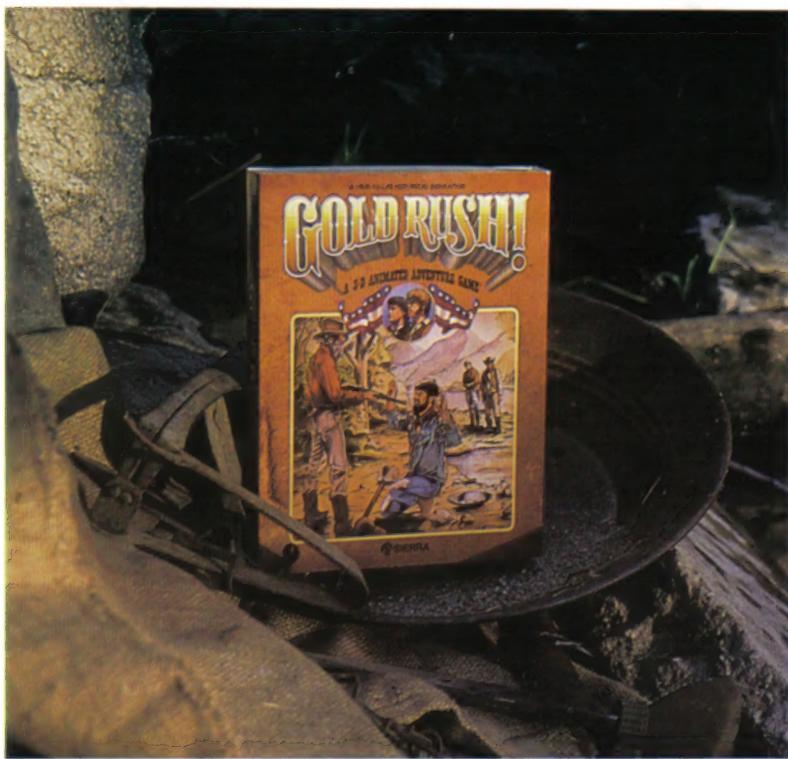
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Manhunter: New
York--Contemporary
Chills and Thrills!

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Gold Rush!--Sierra's 3-D Animated Historical Simulation



by Jerry Albright

As Sierra makes its home here in the gold country of California, intensive research and hard work went in to making Gold Rush! as exciting and historically accurate as the actual events of that era.

Gold Rush! recreates the gold rush of 1849, immersing players into the trials and tribulations of American pioneers that crossed the continental United States in search of wealth and fortune.

Players take on the role of an east coast gentleman in the early 1950's, a time when the west was wild and life was tough on the new frontier. Many trials await the young pioneer, from abandoning their comfortable life in the city to choosing the safest (and quickest) route to take them to the gold country.

"Gold Rush! is designed as an entertainment product. However, in the process of playing the game, you can't help but get a history lesson," states Ken MacNeill, co-designer of Gold Rush!.

In fact, Gold Rush! may be the most enjoyable way to get a history lesson ever as you experience the California gold rush firsthand. Researched for authenticity, Gold Rush! is a simulation that allows you to make all the critical decisions, including the best routes to follow, equipment to take, claims to stake, and much more. Battle the weather, geography and fate as you take on the chance to relive one of America's most exciting eras.

One of Sierra's grandest efforts ever, Gold Rush! is a full five disk simulation with three completely different voyages to the gold country, each with unique

"Having three different ways to play Gold Rush! is a natural byproduct of the history of that era..."



Your journey begins in Brooklyn Heights, New York



Visit exotic places like Rio de Janeiro



Overhead maps plot your path out west

obstacles and perils. States MacNeill, "Having three different ways to play Gold Rush! is a natural byproduct of the history of that era, for there were three common ways to reach California from the East coast. This fascinating feature adds great dimension, diversity and added gameplay to this adventure."

As historically accurate as it is fun to
See Gold Rush! page 6

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Heard It In the Hallway (*Sierra's Rumor Mill*)

by Johnny Magpie

A very early look at what lies ahead for Sierra in 1989/90...

First the bad news. In 1989, there will not be a new **King's Quest**, there will be no **Police Quest III** nor a **Leisure Suit Larry III**. Chances are, we won't even see another hot new action game from **Game Arts of Japan**. **Roberta Williams** (designer of the King's Quest series) is taking a sabbatical from Daventry for a while, and **Jim Walls** (Police Quest) is taking a 10-7 from his work at the Lytton police station.

Now for the good news...

Space Quest III is on schedule for a February release, and it promises to be the very best Space Quest yet. Originally scheduled for release in 1988, the project was held back by the **Two Guys from Andromeda** so they could use Sierra's new SCI technology (see article on page 5) to get the job done.

According to Scott Murphy "...We wanted to do a hot soundtrack for the game (they've enlisted help from **Supertramp recording star Bob Seibenberg** to do the music) and dazzling special effects are expected from space games. We needed the new graphics resolution [of SCI] to design the dogfights in the game. We wanted to be competitive with **Steven Spielberg** and we couldn't do it unless we improved our graphics resolution..."

Look for Two Guys Scott Murphy and

Mark Crowe to make a cameo role in their own game!...

Speaking of Mark Crowe, Mark just finished work in a self-proclaimed "B-Grade Horror Movie" called **Night Drop**. He's now starting work on a horror adventure game. Mark isn't saying much about the project, but "expect it to be a whole lot scarier than **Uninvited** was...." Don't expect it in 1989 though, it's slated for a January 1990 release!...

Looking ahead a little less farther, we see Sierra's first true fantasy role-playing game

since **Ultima**. **New Hero's Quest** (working title) promises to be what 3-D Animated Adventure was to Interactive Fiction. **Hero's Quest** is being designed by accomplished dungeonmaster **Lori Ann Cole**. Expect it to have the look of the Sierra family of games. Mark Crowe's brother, Jeff, is designing the graphics for the game. Expect to see FRP Games as you've never seen them before!...

Also look for a new sequel to the shocking **Manhunter** series in 1989. Sierra's hot new sci-fi series moves from New York to

See *Rumor Mill* page 19

Sierra Ships New Titles for II GS

Apple II GS owners can look forward to loads of exciting new titles to add to their software library!

Shipping now are **King's Quest II**, **King's Quest III**, **Space Quest II**, and **Manhunter: New York**, four of Sierra's hit 3-D Animated Adventure games.

King's Quest II is the historical second chapter in the epic **King's Quest** series. Apple II GS owners can join the ranks of **King's Quest** fans worldwide as they become the daring King Graham on a heroic adventure in the land of Daventry.

King's Quest II features the digitized (and horrifying) screeching of bats, creaking doors, and the terrifying scream of Dracula, just to mention a few.

Original music has been updated and improved to take advantage of the Apple II GS special sound features. In fact, several of the songs were rewritten and new songs added, such as the robot's theme.

The third installment in the series, **King's Quest III** is the bestselling game in Sierra's nine year history. An intermediate to advanced level challenge, **King's Quest III** allows you to play the role of Gwydion, a young lad enslaved by the evil wizard Mannanan.

King's Quest III for the Apple II GS includes many new digitized sound effects and songs specially created for this enhanced version.

Space Quest II is the latest in Sierra's line of 3-D Animated Adventures. Join sanitation engineer turned space hero Roger Wilco as you face the evil scientist Sludge Vohaul and his monkey-suited minions.

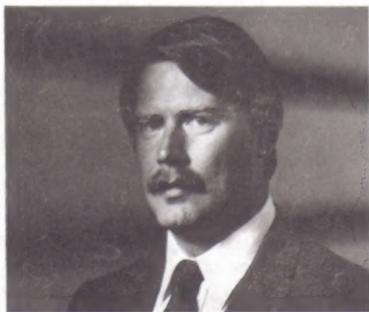
The graphics in the Apple II GS version are as sharp and defined as anything Sierra has ever done. As for sound effects, they are phenomenal! Listen to Vohaul's life support system, as digital sound effects give you the full chilling sound of his evil heartbeat. Listen to the whoosh of airlocks, the blast of laser guns and Roger Wilco being zapped electrically, all in super stereo sound!

Manhunter: New York is Sierra's latest and greatest game ever for the II GS, encompassing 4 3 1/2" disks! With loads of new sound effects and eerie music, Sierra gamers will be thrilled to hear digitized alien voices, the popping sound of squished heads, and the pounding sound of fists on flesh as they tackle Sierra's most gruesome game ever. Gunshots, explosions, and shattering glass add to the chills as you work the streets of New York as a "private eye" for a hostile race of alien invaders.

Also, look for more great II GS titles to arrive soon, as Sierra's team of game designers are currently working on II GS versions of **Goldrush!**, **King's Quest IV** and **Silpheed** to be shipped in the upcoming months. You can count on Sierra to team up with the Apple II GS for great game software.

The Sierra
Newsletter
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P R E S I D E N T ' S C O R N E R



by Ken Williams

On June 4, 1988, at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, Illinois, Sierra On-Line made some rather unusual announcements to the press.

The first announcement was the signing of Hollywood composer William (Bill) Goldstein, known for his work on the television series *Fame*, Touchstone's *Hello Again*, and other film and music projects.

I still remember the call to Bill Goldstein's agent, Stan Milander (who also handles many of Hollywood's other hot talents), in which I explained what I was looking for. It went something like this: "Hello, Stan. This is Ken Williams from Sierra On-Line. I'm looking for a top composer to do the score for an interactive movie (*interactive movie* was the best description I could think to give our product)."

I was desperately hoping that Stan had an open mind. Much of the world still believes that *Pac-Man* and *Space Invaders* represent the state-of-the-art in computer gaming. What serious composer would want to do music for toys? Most of the big name composers are represented by one of a small number of agents. Stan was my last hope, since none of the other agents took me seriously enough to return my calls. I explained to Stan the kind of product Sierra strives to create and that we actually view our products as interactive movies. We allow the player to assume the identity of a character in our "film" and experience life as a space-aged swashbuckler, policeman, heroic prince or princess, and even a 40-year-old nerd. Our games tell a story which has a definite beginning, mid-

dle and end, complete with good guys and bad guys.

Then I explained to Stan that I was looking for a composer who understood the new, evolving electronic music; one who considered himself/herself to be on the cutting edge of this new technology; one who would be excited at the prospect of exploring new frontiers.

After patiently listening to my 20-minute monologue, Stan replied that yes, he did have such a person. However, I would have to convince this person that computer games deserved great music. He added, "By the way, do you realize that good things don't come cheap?" Once again, I explained to him how we were making history.

All of this resulted in my first meeting with Bill Goldstein, composer extraordinaire, which we held in Oakhurst, California. After repeating my 20-minute monologue on how I believe computer-based entertainment will some day replace movies, TV, books, records, etc., Bill posed the most important question yet to be asked. "What does a computer sound like?"

The IBM PC was never meant for music. It doesn't have a speaker; it has a buzzer. I'm convinced that it was designed with one purpose in mind, to "beep".

Among the limitations of the PC buzzer is the fact that there is no volume control. One of the things that makes a piano sound interesting is that the first part of a note is louder than the last part. Also, on a piano you can press more than one key at a time. Not so with the PC buzzer--all it can do is make one note at a time, which has no attack or decay. It sounds like a "stuck" flute. The Tandy 1000 is slightly better with three simultaneous notes, but there's still no way to make them sound like musical instruments. Even the highly touted Amiga is limited to four simultaneous notes--only two if you want stereo.

After listening to various types of PC's at our headquarters, Bill told me in all

Three More Sierra Games Go for the Gold!

Very few software products are good enough to command sales of 100,000 units, and only the very best titles earn the coveted SPA Gold Medal from the Software Publishers Association. The SPA actually does an audit of company sales figures to verify sales levels of bestselling titles, so it isn't a small achievement when one is awarded.

With this in mind, Sierra is proud to announce that it has been awarded not one - but three - SPA Gold Medals since our last newsletter in May. Titles awarded gold medals include: King's Quest III (Roberta Williams), Space Quest (Scott Murphy and Mark Crowe) and Thexder (Game Arts of Japan).

According to Sierra Marketing Director John Williams, the achievement of these awards is a special thrill for the company. "Each of the titles awarded the Gold Award continues to be a top seller," said Williams. Williams was especially happy about the success of Thexder, Sierra's first arcade title since 1985. "We were pleased to see that Sierra customers still love a good arcade challenge. Thexder went over well here in America - it was our bestselling title last Christmas."

Sierra now holds eight SPA Gold Medals, and is preparing to receive its first Platinum Medal (for sales in excess of 250,000 units) sometime before the next newsletter.

Sierra's Top 5 Bestsellers

1. King's Quest IV
2. Police Quest
3. King's Quest III
4. Space Quest II
5. Leisure Suit Larry

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King's Quest IV-- A Technological Wonder

by Jerry Albright

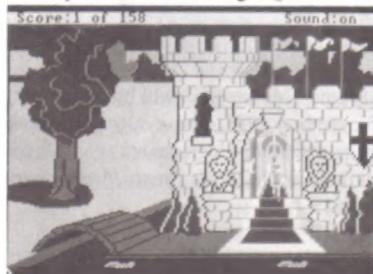
How many times have you booted up a game on your MS-DOS computer to hear a full stereo musical soundtrack bursting forth? The future of Sierra gaming promises that and much more as the most sophisticated computer adventure of all time gets ready to ship for your home computer.

Beginning with King's Quest IV, Sierra introduces a new line of technologically superior interactive movies, complete with stereo soundtracks, fully animated cartoon sequences and double the graphics resolution of previous Sierra adventures.

King's Quest IV is not only Sierra's most anticipated adventure to date, but also its most exciting, with more technological advancements and features than any previous adventure game from Sierra. With over 3 million dollars in underlying technology, Sierra's 3-D Animated Adventure game system has earned raves around the world from both customers and software critics. King's Quest IV prepares its

proprietary system for the 1990's with over \$400,000 in technological improvements over its predecessors.

With over 11 man years in development and a team of over 13 programmers, developers and artists, King's Quest IV of-



King's Quest I (AGI)

fers double the graphics resolution of our current adventure game line, interactivity that surpasses previous adventures, and a full 32-voice music capability that will simply astound you.

Forty minutes of original music have been composed especially for King's

Quest IV by William Goldstein, known for his previous work on the TV series *Fame*, the Touchstone Pictures film *Hello Again*, and the record album *Switched-On Classics*. This original soundtrack gives Sierra's interactive computer software a



King's Quest IV (SCI)

truly cinematic sound quality with its support of IBM's eight-voice music card, the AdLib Music Synthesizer Card, and the Roland MT-32 music card (featuring a 32-voice synthesizer).

See Technology page 9

The Men Behind the Mysterious Manhunter: New York

by Jerry Albright



Dave, Dee Dee and Barry Murry

Sierra: How did you get your start?

Murry's: We started out in the Pac Man days around 1980. We were working on the Heathkit computer doing arcade games. We did that for about a year or two, and then decided that was too much work. We basically were responsible for packaging, the entire business end of the product, in

addition to the programming and everything else. That was too much. So then we decided to work on the IBM, which led us to Sierra. We approached them with the idea for Championship Boxing and that became our first IBM game.

Sierra: How do you get your game ideas?

Murry's: Well, we've always had a head full of ideas, different kinds of projects we have wanted to do. We basically started working through the different game ideas we enjoyed, beginning with sports simulation, then on to war strategy, and now here we are with adventure games, the first one being Manhunter.

Sierra: What inspired Manhunter?

We wanted to design a horror game, so we played with that idea for awhile. But it

didn't quite click, so we came up with a science fiction game, and worked on that for awhile, but that didn't quite work out either. Finally, after about six months we came up with the Manhunter concept, and we liked it because it has elements of both horror and science fiction, and it also has a good dose of humor to balance out the horror. We also like the fact that the aliens haven't taken over the world yet and it takes place in the near future which gave us great freedom to include a wide variety of surprise elements into the game.

Sierra: What is a Manhunter?

Murry's: It's this guy's first day on the job, so he's basically like you or me, kind of in the dark. It's all new to him. He's just a part of the crowd like anyone else...until

See Murry's page 8

Smart Money Enhanced for the Apple IIGS

Sierra's complete personal finance product has been adapted to the Apple IIGS. According to Ken Williams, "In converting Smart Money to the Apple IIGS we wanted to fully utilize the power of that machine. We didn't convert our Apple 2E version but instead completely redesigned the product around the mouse-oriented, dialog box, pull-down menu graphical interface of the 2GS. This is by far the easiest to use version of Smart Money and will become the template for our Macintosh and Windows versions".

Smart Money is an easy and efficient way to manage all personal finances, from simple household budgets to complicated investment analyses.

Smart Money is designed with the power and performance inherent in business accounting products, but tailored for personal use. Not only does it handle monthly bill paying (like most personal financial software packages), but Smart Money is equipped to easily manage the really difficult tasks, like computing loan payments and long term investment strategies.

Smart Money is a wise investment for those whose finances have outgrown simple paper and pencil accounting.



Smart Money IIGS will be available in November, 1988 with a suggested retail price of \$69.95. Upgrades are available for current Apple IIe/IIc Smart Money users for \$15.

Send upgrade requests to:

Smart Money Apple Upgrade
Sierra On-Line, Inc.
P.O.Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614

Gold Rush!

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play, Gold Rush! is high adventure that will enrich your understanding of the rugged life on the American frontier. "While recreating the world of 1848-49, the two things in particular I enjoyed were reading diaries of real 49ers, and making trips to places like Sacramento, Sutter's Fort, Coloma and other towns in the California gold country. I think that after playing Gold Rush! you will appreciate those experiences too," said Doug MacNeill, the other half of the Gold Rush! design team.

Once the player gets to California, a whole new world of adventure begins. "A great variety of puzzles are to be found in California," states Doug, "that really intensify the gold rush experience. But the greatest, and most exciting challenge of all lies in the search for an elusive fortune in gold hidden somewhere in the vast frontier of California."

There's a mother lode of gold waiting for some lucky adventurer, so head out west with Gold Rush! Great for home or school, this is one adventure that puts old and young alike into the shoes of our forefathers.

GET BLOWN AWAY BY SIERRA'S NEW STEREO ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE!

The same full stereo sounds you enjoy on your home stereo and television set are now available for your personal computer! Sierra games now feature full stereo soundtracks as composed by popular recording artists, including Hollywood composer William Goldstein and Rock 'n Roll musician Bob Siebenberg of Supertramp. Each Sierra game supports a variety of sound cards with a broad range of features and prices.

Listen to the music potential of your personal computer by ordering Sierra's FREE Music Demonstration cassette. Included on the cassette are samples of Sierra

game soundtracks as performed on an IBM computer with the Roland MT-32 Sound Module and the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card. Compare for yourself the different sounds and decide which music product is right for you.

Roland



Call Sierra today!

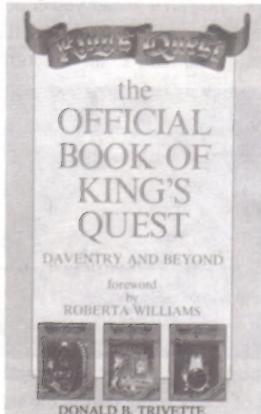
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PURCHASE DIRECT FROM SIERRA
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demonstrating the Ad Lib Music
Synthesizer Card and the
Roland MT-32! Hear the
sounds of Sierra's new
entertainment
software!

Compute! Book Tells the Complete Story of King's Quest Series

COMPUTE! Books, a book publishing division of entertainment conglomerate ABC, has just put the finishing wraps on "The Official Book of King's Quest" a revealing and authoritative volume on the bestselling series of 3-D Animated Adventures.



The Official Book of King's Quest
ture Games.

According to Steve Levy, editor at COMPUTE!, "The Official Book of King's Quest" offers an in-depth look at the popular game, its makers, and the secrets behind its design. It will contain many clues to puzzles in each of the King's Quest games, and reveal never-before design secrets on how the graphics and animation of the game were developed.

Among the most interesting sections of "The Official Book of King's Quest" explains how users can get at the top secret "Author's Tools" that Sierra employees

have long used to move around at will in each of the Sierra adventure games. By accessing these tools, the reader will have powers in Sierra adventures that are nearly invincible.

Another popular section will likely be the detailed "pre-release" look at King's Quest IV. Besides offering the first inside look at the new game technology of Sierra's SCI Development System, the book will be the first on the market to offer game hints on King's Quest IV. Sierra's King's Quest IV Hint Book, which will be held from the public until the completion of the "Master Adventurers Contest", is not scheduled for release until after Christmas.

According to author Donald B. Trivette, "The Official Book of King's Quest" is the end result of over four years of writing about the King's Quest series. "From the first time I wrote about King's Quest in 1984 (Don was the editor of the IBM section of COMPUTE! Magazine) I have received a steady stream of letters about the product. "The Official Book of King's Quest" highlights all the things I really like about the King's Quest games, from both a storytelling and a programming standpoint."

"The Official Book of King's Quest" is now available at most major bookstores and better computer and software stores. You can also order the book directly from Sierra by using the order form on page 30 of this newsletter.

Sierra Completes Conversion of Color Macintosh Games

Macintosh II owners can now enjoy playing Sierra games that were meant to be seen-in living color. Sierra has now completed color conversions of all current Sierra 3-D Animated Adventure Games on the Macintosh II. Macintosh II owners will now have the opportunity to choose between black and white or color when playing Sierra adventure games.

Sierra's plans include support of color on all future 3-D Animated Adventure Games for the Macintosh II. All versions will be shipped in one package that will

also support the Macintosh 512, Macintosh Plus and Macintosh SE computers.

Current Sierra programs to support the Macintosh II in color include the King's Quest series, the Space Quest series, Police Quest, Mixed-up Mother Goose and Leisure Suit Larry in the Land of the Lounge Lizards. Macintosh II owners can upgrade their black and white copies of Sierra On-Line 3-D Animated Adventures to color by calling Sierra On-Line's Customer Support Division at (209) 683-6858.

King's Quest

continued from page 1

where landscapes change from day to night, characters roam freely, and dramatic music interludes tantalize your emotions in a complicated tale of faith and mistrust. The quest begins with a full-length cartoon (approx. 10 minutes playing time) and proceeds to plunge you into a fantasy world of mystery, intrigue and enough plot twists to confound even the most dedicated adventurer.

Embark upon a perilous journey into the darkest corners of the King's Quest universe. Find yourself in the midst of not one, but many different obstacles as you plot a course that will save the royal family from a tragic destiny. With a surprise introduction and an equally unexpected conclusion, plot twists abound as you strive to uncover the mysteries of a strange land, overcome its hostile inhabitants, and reveal the secrets that lie therein.

King's Quest fans and newcomers to animated adventures will meet and interact with creatures of fantasy, folklore and science fiction. They will explore hundreds of locations, acquire invaluable objects, and discover secret and scary places. Travel the land after dark, and discover areas which remain hidden during daylight hours. But travel swiftly, as time is of the essence, and each moment brings your family ever closer to ruin.

Successful Word Search Winners Announced

Congratulations to the 13 winners of the Mixed-Up Mother Goose Puzzle in the Spring Newsletter. (Indeed, Mother Goose was a little mixed-up, as our readers pointed out three mistakes in the puzzle. We apologize, and again congratulate all of the observant contestants out there!) A special pat on the back goes out to our three bonus word finders who found the hidden word "pretty maids." Each one of the following *bonus word* finders will receive the three Sierra games of their choice:

Larry E. Huber, Stockton, CA
Wesley Woodland, Murray, UT
Connie Tessier, Manchester, NH
The other 10 winners are as follows:
Louis Meinecke, Valparaiso, IND
Mele Ortiz, Chicago, ILL
Andr Gregg, Grand Prairie, TX
Norma Caplan, Dayton, OH
Arlene Amodei, Sierraville, CA (no joke!)
David DiBartolomeo, Merrimac, MA
Matthew Lurie, Evanston, ILL
M. Dean Hutchison, Provo, UT
Judy Johnson, Shoreview, MN
Matthew Jaksa, Kansas City, KS

Manhunter: New York (A Review)

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Manhunter: New York is a Sierra 3-D Animated Adventure Game that's quite unlike any the company has ever released before. It's also a new and unexpected direction for the design team of Dave, Barry and Dee Dee Murry, who also created "The Ancient Art of War" and "The



Ancient Art of War at Sea" for Broderbund. Manhunter: New York is a first-person science fiction adventure that takes place in New York City in the year 2004, shortly after an alien invasion and subsequent world takeover. The alien Orb Alliance has subjugated all humans, implanted them with tracking devices, ordered that they wear brown robes and

not speak to other humans under pain of death, and generally devastated the city of



New York. To maintain their iron-handed dictatorship over humans, the Alliance enlists the aid of select humans to become Manhunters - detectives who spy on their fellow humans, track them with the aid of hand-held computers, and report subversive human activities to the Alliance.

Play the game, and you become one of these Manhunters, racing scores of unimaginable dangers as you track your fellow humans through a representation of New York that is familiar yet strangely different. The designers have crafted a very compelling story, filled it with moments of both sheer horror and tension-relieving

humor, and used the framework of Sierra's now-familiar 3-D Animated Adventure system in a whole new way. Views switch from first-person participant to third-person observer, and cinematic techniques such as zooms and close-ups add visual interest. The story can be played several ways, depending on whether you choose to align with the evil aliens or take the risk of joining fellow humans in an underground



movement. Keyboard entry is minimal, and the sense of really being part of the story is heightened by the use of real New York locales and overall excellent programming. We found Manhunter: New York a fascinating and very sophisticated role-playing game that is quite out of the ordinary.

Murry's

continued from page 5

the day when the aliens contact him and say hey, you're going to be a Manhunter.

Sierra: You wanted to make the player feel he has actually become the main character in the game. How did you accomplish that?

Murry's: We made it the Manhunter's first day on the job so that the player would feel on par with the character that he/she is playing. We also used a first person perspective, which allows the player to see a situation the way the character would, although we do switch to third person perspective occasionally for effect or to clarify what is transpiring around the player.

Sierra: What lies next in the Manhunter universe?

Murry's: When working out the background for the Manhunter scenario we

were actually thinking two or three stories ahead. We already have a general plotline for what would transpire after the events of Manhunter, if indeed the story were to continue.

Sierra: Continuing to look forward, what do you see in the future for computer games?

Murry's: Right now games are still fairly narrow compared to what they could be...they are either sports simulations, strategy war games, adventure games, and so on. Eventually, with the advancement of computer technology, you could have an adventure game where the character is a pilot, and that would incorporate a complete flight simulator. That pilot may have to go to war, at which time the game could incorporate a full-scale war strategy game.

Sierra: Do you see any of this type of game-planning taking place?

Murry's: Some of that is beginning to happen, the combining of different elements to create one game. But it will be some time before you will see a full-blown feature length game that will have all the elements of real-life strategy and simulation at the same time.

Sierra: What do you consider the ultimate computer game?

Murry's: Games that add an extension to your life. Not everybody can climb a Mount Everest or step into the ring against a Mike Tyson...the ideal is that when someone plays a game they actually think they are doing what the game sets them out to do. With Manhunter and its follow up we hope to incorporate the elements of gameplay that will have players believe they have just experienced a living nightmare, while having a good time, of course.

President's Corner

continued from page 4

honesty, "Ken, don't waste your money. These computers are not capable of music." Bill spent the afternoon explaining the difference between a "score" and a "song". The purpose of a score is to evoke emotion—not to be hummed. Sometimes the score consists only of some chord being held and slowly becoming louder in order to create a feeling of tenseness. In creating a score, the instrument(s) it is composed for can be as important as the score itself.

In essence, having Bill compose for the IBM PC would be like killing flies with a shot gun.

But, Bill had an idea. He said, "Ken, I do some work with Roland (who makes high-end professional music gear) beta testing their keyboards. They might be willing to make a card for the PC that could do great music."

I didn't know how to explain to Bill that one doesn't just pick up the phone and call the president of a major company and ask for a new computer peripheral so computer games can have real music. So, we did!

The conversation went something like this. "Hello, Tom [Beckman, President/CEO of Roland Corporation]. This is Ken and Bill [20-minute monologue]". To my total amazement, this forward thinking, business savvy gentleman said the magic words, "No problem."

Last year Roland released a device for musicians that would allow their electronic keyboards to sound like hundreds of different instruments, from tubas to cymbals. This device, known as the "MT-32," allowed up to 32 notes to be played simultaneously and up to 8 keyboards to be playing at the same time. The MT-32 uses a new technique to make music called Linear Synthesis (no, I don't know how it works). I spend a lot of my spare time as a music "hacker," and the MT-32 has some of the best sound I've ever heard. Better yet, Tom believed he could deliver the MT-32 on a card to plug into a PC for \$550, including software to make your own music.

Well, now I had something. A composer and a way to play real music. Some people around the office scratched their heads and

asked how many people would be willing to spend \$550 to "listen" to music from their computers. I explained the chicken and egg theory.

When Bill sat down to compose, we discovered to what extent we were pioneering. To compose for a film, Bill works from a video tape. It's a bit hard to video tape *King's Quest IV*. How do you predict what the player is going to do? For instance, from a musical viewpoint, being chased by an ogre really consists of three pieces of music: One tune for the first encounter, one for the actual chase (which could be of any length), and one for the capture.

Another interesting problem was synchronizing the animation to the music. Animation speed can vary from machine to machine (try *King's Quest IV* on a PCjr and then on a 80386). How do you get the bolt of lightning to strike at the exact time the snare drum sounds?

Then, it got tougher still. We needed music that would sound great on everything from the single voice PC up to the MT-32. Remember that our products run on IBMs, MACs, Apples, Ataris and Commodores.

Was it all worth it? When we previewed *King's Quest IV* to an "invitation-only" crowd at the Summer CES, I saw the full range of emotional reaction to the product. There were tears and laughter during emotional scenes.

Turn off the sound on your TV and see if you care what happens to the characters. Why do you think that back in the Silent Picture Era organists were hired to perform live in theaters. Music isn't an interesting option—it's an important integral part of the whole experience.

Will people pay the price to hear it? I hope so. Our new products support a wide variety of options, in addition to the MT-32. For instance, Ad-Lib makes a card for only \$200 which is limited to eight notes. But don't let that fool you. It's more than eight times better than just one note. Hearing is believing.

Ken Williams



Technology

continued from page 5

Those who want to take advantage of the latest MS-DOS music cards don't have to wait forever to enjoy the future of computer sound on their computer, for *King's Quest IV* (and all Sierra adventure games to follow) will create an orchestra of sound output on your formerly one-voice PC (Tandy users excepted).

What's more, the stereo-supported soundtrack brings the emotion of music to the game's storyline as never witnessed before. From the terrifying "Zombie's Night" to the joyful elation of "Cupid's Theme", players will experience the feelings of the character through the ever-changing musical moods throughout the game.

The new technology behind *King's Quest IV* also provides for highly enhanced graphics, with double the resolution and detail of earlier games. Animation is better than ever, and the IBM compatible version includes enhanced animation when run on a computer with a fast 80286 or 80386 microprocessor. It also supports the entire scope of IBM-compatible graphics modes, including CGA, EGA, MCGA and VGA.

King's Quest IV also sets another computer software first by beginning with an animated cartoon (nearly ten minutes in length). The cartoon outlines the entire drama of *King's Quest IV*, and brings veteran players up-to-date with the ongoing saga of the King Graham clan.

So boot up your computer, and prepare for a entertaining product that is not only creatively innovative, but technologically innovative as well.

Apple II Graphics Book Available

Hundreds of people responded to the offer in our last newsletter on the availability of Ken William's book "Apple II Computer Graphics."

To order your copy, send a check for \$7.00 (half suggested retail price). As an added bonus, we will pay shipping and handling. Checks received after inventory is exhausted will be returned uncashed.

Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card Supports Sierra Games

Sierra was the first company to successfully exploit enhanced graphics in entertainment products. Sierra again leads the pack by introducing enhanced soundtracks to its games. Beginning with the new King's Quest IV, Sierra will support the most popular music cards. Now, PC users will not only have better graphics, but also tremendous sound. In this issue, we're reviewing the most affordable and widely known music card supported by Sierra: The Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card.

It's amazing to hear the great sound produced by this half-size card when it plays the King's Quest IV soundtrack with up to 11 different instruments at the same time. With this card, Ad Lib, Inc. offers a surprisingly inexpensive music synthesizer based on FM technology, the same as you can find on many popular keyboards. One familiar with the sound of this technology will be amazed to hear such percussive sounds as bass drum, tom-tom, cymbal and hi-hat. This is because the card is cleverly designed to combine the use of white noise generation with FM synthesis.

The Ad Lib card package includes the

Juke Box playback program and a selection of 20 songs. These demo songs are written in various musical styles and are great to listen to. The Juke Box is fun and easy to use; its turntable spins as the music plays away.

Another nice thing about this card is that there's a comprehensive line of music software available. This line includes such varied titles as: Visual Composer, a spreadsheet-like music editor; Visual Composer/MIDI Supplement, an extensive MIDI sequencing option; Instrument Maker, a patch editor; Pop-Tunes, a memory resident playback program, and Music Championship #1, a game that is both fun and highly educational. As a matter of fact, the user interface of these software packages is one of the best we've seen so far.

Also, programmers will be delighted to see the extensive technical information available in the Programmer's Manual. Ad Lib, Inc. has chosen to provide their file formats so that song and instrument files created with third party software can be compatible. This is a good move and Ad

Lib, Inc. is to be congratulated for this decision.

Answering to questions on what's new from Ad Lib, Inc., Martin Prevel, the president of the company said, "We're working on a powerful staff notation printing program to be released by the end of the year. We're also planning a national composition contest for the Ad Lib card as well as a user BBS for the exchange of song and instrument files."

The Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card is a half-size card that will fit into any expansion slot on the PC motherboard. On the back of it, there is a volume control and an audio jack to which you can attach headphones, external speakers or even your home stereo system.

If you are interested in increasing your enjoyment of new entertainment software as well as putting an 11-voice multtimbral music synthesizer in your own PC, we strongly recommend the Ad Lib Music Synthesizer Card: the new industry standard for sound enhancement on IBM PCs and compatibles.

The Eyes Have It (Sierra's Picture Puzzle Winners Announced!)

Congratulations are in order to the 10 winners of Sierra's first picture puzzle, "How Good Are Your Eyes?". The first 10 people to discover all of the changes were as follows:

Julie Her Many Horses, Mission, SD
George Myers, Jr. Arlington, VA
Marcus Hayes, Spokane, WA
Richard Kessler, Navasots, TX
Khalifa Martin, Opelousas, LA
Robert Jones, Los Angeles, CA
Robert Savage, Gardnerville, NV
Michael Reed, Fontana, CA
Fred Boyd, Bluffton, SC
Elaine Willcox, Schenectady, NY

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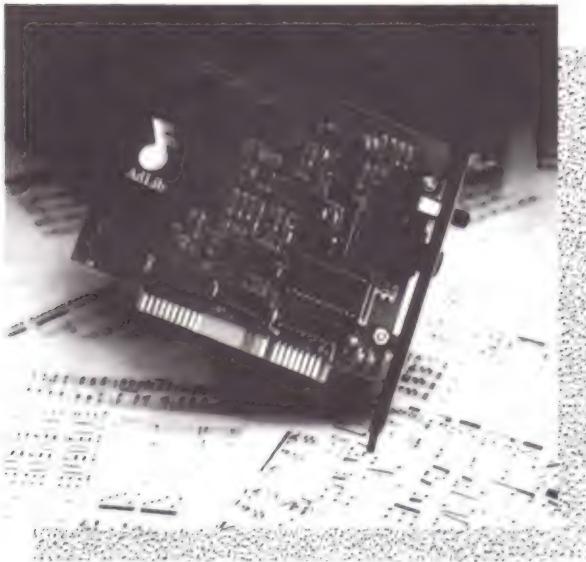
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Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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AD LIB **MUSIC SYNTHESIZER CARD** **THE AFFORDABLE MUSIC CARD** **FOR KING'S QUEST IV** **AND** **FUTURE RELEASES**



Discover a new dimension in computer entertainment with the Ad Lib Music Card and Sierra's new 3-D Animated Adventures. Expand beyond the world of games and unleash your musical creativity with Ad Lib's complete line of music software.

This half-size card (at less than half the price of other PC compatible music cards) can play up to 11 sounds at the same time. But don't be fooled by the low price and small size of the Ad Lib Music Card. It can play a full range of instruments, everything from pianos and electric guitars, to snare drums and game sounds.

**LOOK FOR \$20 REBATE COUPON
PACKED INSIDE SELECTED SIERRA
ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTS.**

The Ad Lib Music Card comes with the Ad Lib Juke Box playback program and a unique selection of original songs as well as a few old favorites. Just pick a song title, sit back, turn up the volume and enjoy the music.

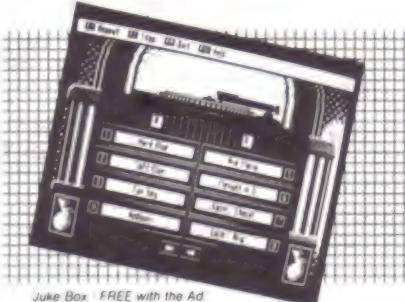
Ad Lib has a comprehensive line of music software which includes such varied titles as: Visual Composer, a spreadsheet-like music editor and Visual Composer/MIDI Supplement, an extensive MIDI sequencing option; Instrument Maker, a patch editor; Pop-Tunes, a memory resident playback program; and Music Championship #1, a game that is both fun and educational.

1-800-344-7448

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- Play up to 11 sounds at once.
- FM synthesis and white noise generator.
- Amplified audio output through an external speaker, headphones or stereo system.
- Fully programmable.
- Comes with song playback program.

**BRING YOUR GAMES TO
LIFE WITH THE AD LIB
MUSIC CARD!**



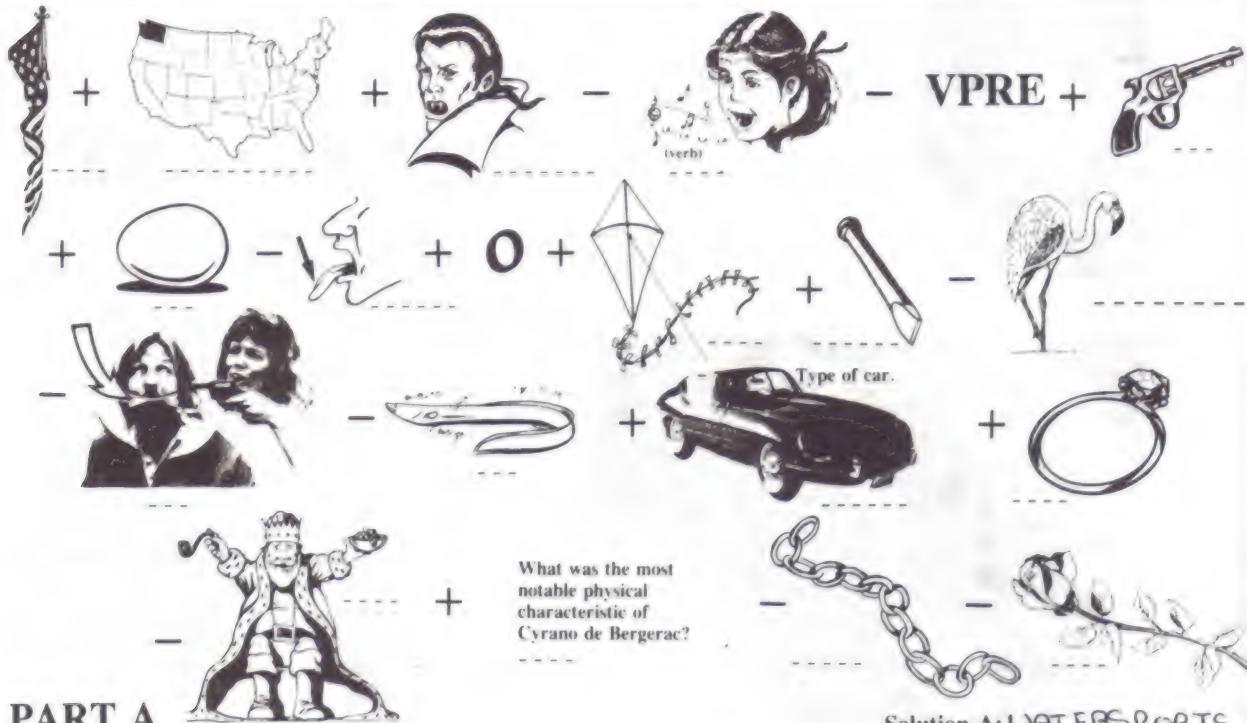
Juke Box FREE with the Ad Lib card!

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P.O. BOX 485
COARSEGOLD, CA 93614**

 **SIERRA**

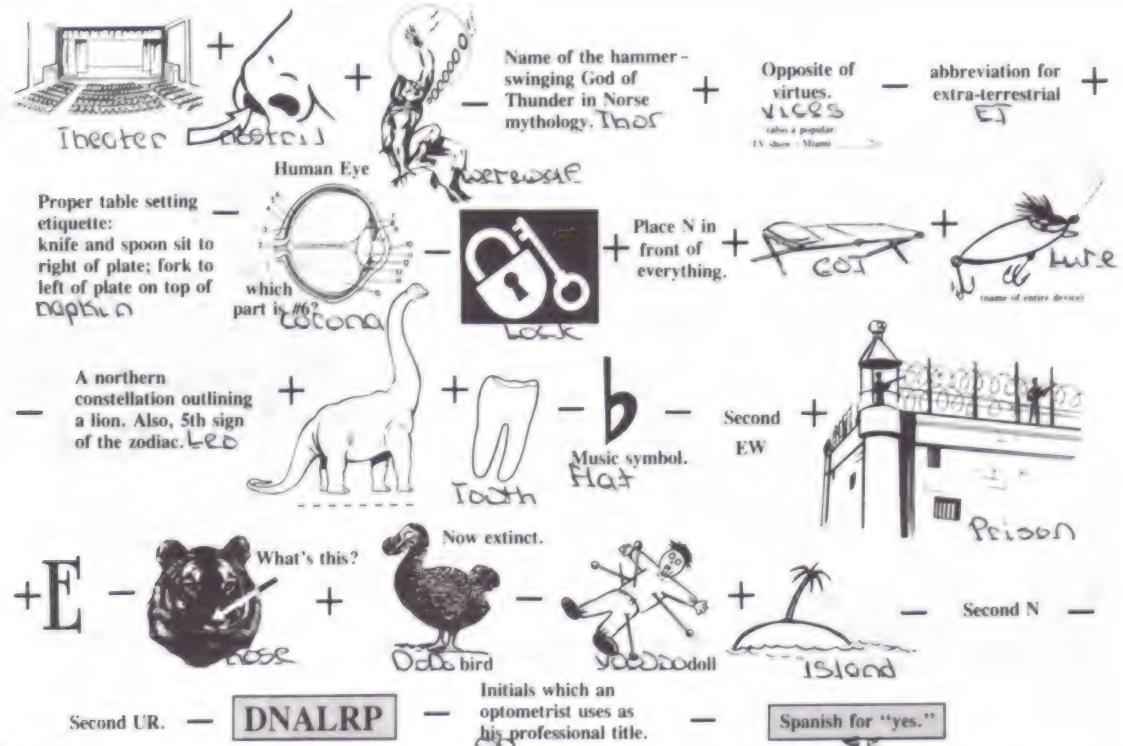
S I E R R A G R A M

To solve this puzzle, write the names of the items you see and add or subtract letters as shown. Be careful to spell each item correctly and to add or subtract letters in the order in which you come to them. Ex. $6 - \text{SIX} - \text{SIX} = \text{SIXGUN} = \text{IXG}$ Follow instructions such as "Interchange D and M" very carefully. Also, some items contain an arrow pointing to a specific part of an object. **SPECIAL NOTE:** Several items are shown within a shaded box. In these cases, the item is to be added or subtracted **backwards** from your list. At the end of each section, the correct number of spaces is provided. All four completed sections combined in the correct order at the end provide the entire answer. Good luck!



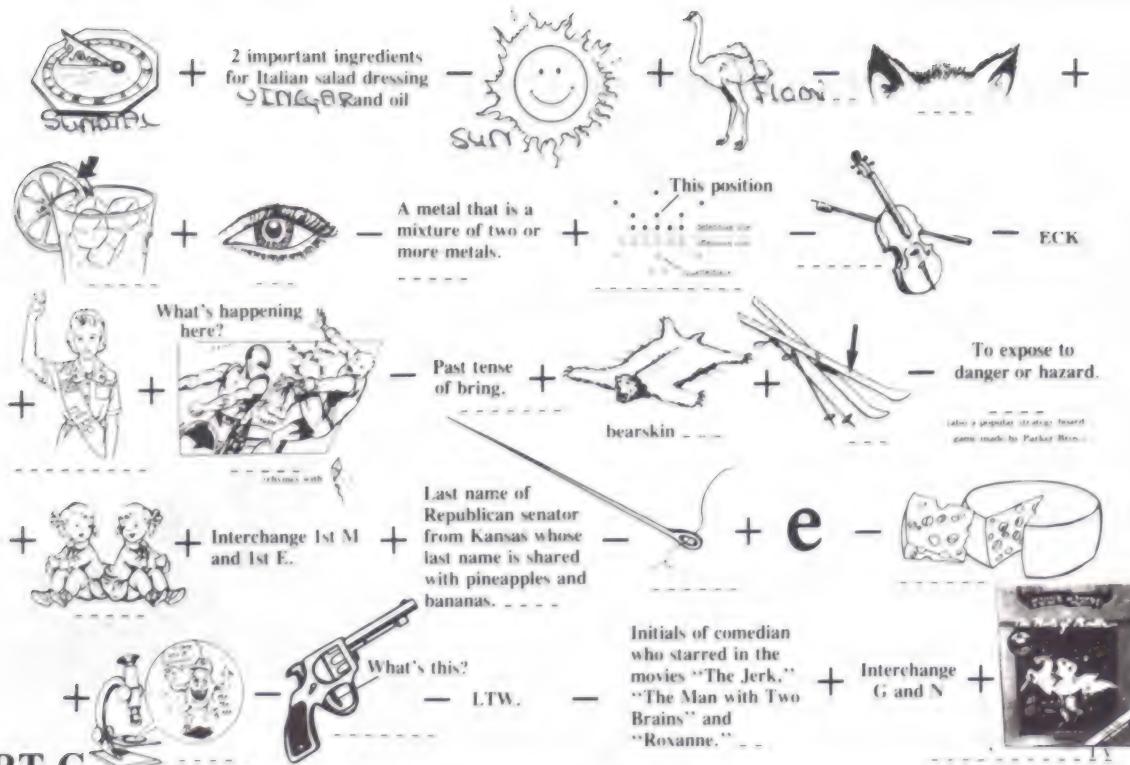
PART A

Solution A: WATERPROOF



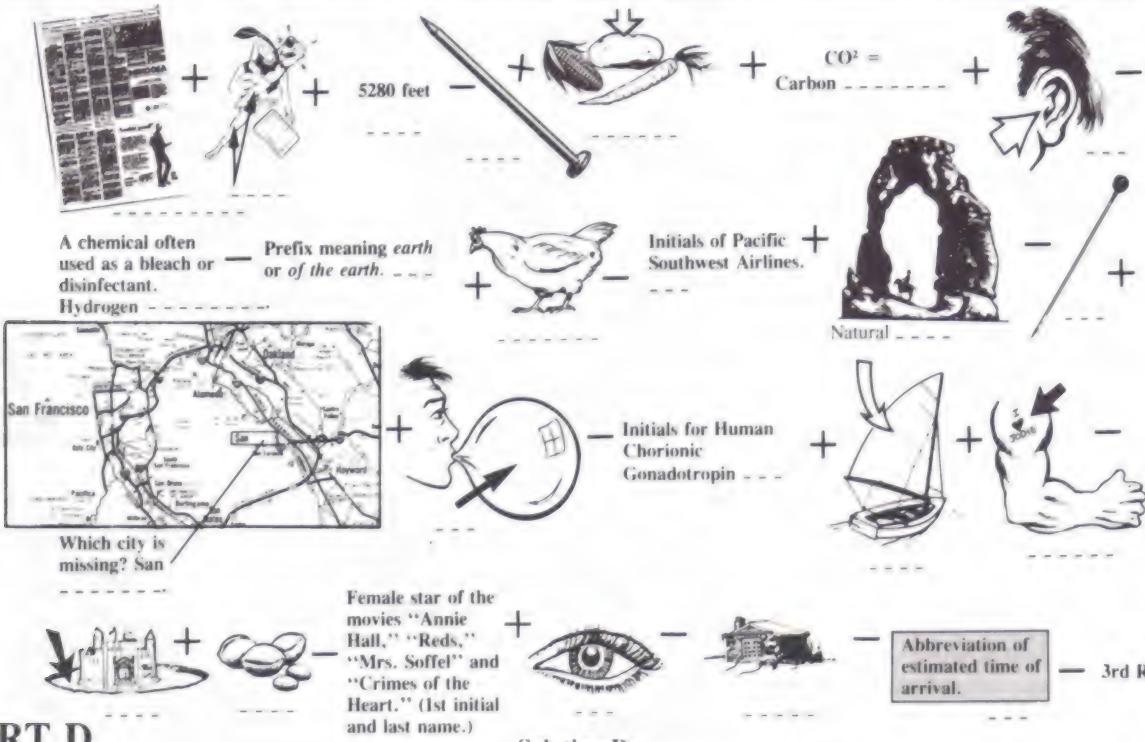
PART B

Solution B: -----



PART C

Solution C:



PART D

Solution D:

Combine all four solutions in the following order: ACBD. Now subtract: JOY.

Final solution:

Please send your entry to: SIERRAGRAM, Sierra On-Line, Inc., P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614. Be one of the first 10 winners and receive the Sierra software product of your choice. Please include your name, address, phone number and choice of product.

Sierra Extends Hint Hotlines for Holiday Season

In preparation for Christmas 1988 and beyond, Sierra On-Line, Inc. is proud to announce extended hours for Customer Support. Starting November 1, 1988 Sierra is keeping customer support lines open from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. (PST). Sierra game players on the East Coast will be able to call for hints until midnight each night.

According to Sierra Marketing Director John Williams, these extended customer service policies are unmatched in the entertainment software industry. "To my knowledge, we are the only producer of computer adventure games that offers a "hint hotline" to its customers. I'm sure that we're the only ones who will take calls 13 hours a day."

Sierra's decision to add a second shift to its customer service department was largely based on experiences the company had the last holiday season.

Last year Sierra sold over 1/4 million adventure games during the Christmas season, almost all of them gifts. Hundreds of thousands of people started playing new Sierra games and found themselves stuck in Sarien-infested spaceships or turned into snails by an evil wizard. On the 26th of December, most of them called Sierra's Hint Hotline for help.

The impact of all this telephone traffic was amazing. Thousands of calls came into the company each day, jamming telephone exchanges all over the state. It was a situation that the local telephone company could not believe.

"It was incredible," says Ed Lacey of the Sierra Telephone Company. "During peak times we were turning away thousands of calls an hour at the local exchange. They (calls to Sierra) were causing traffic problems as far away as Modesto and Sacramento."

By the end of March last year, Sierra had answered over 60,000 hint requests from as far away as Europe and the Middle East. "We had everyone available on the phones," stated Sierra support representative Carla Jones, "including the president, his wife and kids."

A second group of employees had to be

set up to handle bad disk replacement and compatibility calls. Despite Sierra's reputation of having the most compatible software in the industry, new Christmas hardware presented some real problems.

"Each Christmas, all the major hardware vendors introduce a new computer which doesn't seem to be 100% compatible with the software out there. Since Sierra's software pushes computers pretty hard, we usually have compatibility problems first," said John Williams.

Owners of IBM PS/2 Model 80's, those owning high speed 80386 machines, and owners of Macintosh II's found odd surprises in the graphics of their Sierra adventure games. On one machine, when the main character walked across the screen, his image was left behind every time he took a step. "My screen looks like the Rockettes dressed as Leisure Suit Larry," quipped one disgruntled customer. (Those problems have since been remedied.)

This year, Sierra Customer Service people are better prepared for the holiday season, with a larger, highly trained staff, more phone lines, and alternate hint sources available - but problems can still be expected. "There's a limited number of telephone lines that come into Coarsegold, California, and once those are filled, we'll still have jams -- and this Christmas Sierra will sell twice as many adventure games," stated Williams.

To avoid the telephone traffic jam, Sierra has prepared a bulletin on "How to Avoid the Holiday Hint Crush," and will distribute over 400,000 copies of the bulletin before Christmas day. According to Williams, "We don't see any way possible to keep up with the hint demand after Christmas. It's really a matter of limited resources. I could hire an army and not get this job done, it's just too much at once. I hope the bulletin helps prevent frustration because I don't know what else we can do." The text of this bulletin is included in the following article.

To those stuck in the post-Christmas telephone traffic jam (including our mountain neighbors that will experience restricted telephone service) Sierra apologizes in advance. We are doing every-

thing possible to relieve pressure on the system and we appreciate your patience.

Sierra's Telephone Hint Line number is

(209) 683-6858

"HOW TO AVOID THE HOLIDAY HINT CRUSH"

In an effort to relieve the "telephone traffic jams" into Sierra this post-Christmas season, and allow others in our town to make a long distance phone call every once in a while, we offer the following suggestions on getting post-holiday hints:

1. DON'T TRY TO PLAY THROUGH YOUR GAME IN ONE DAY

Too many adventure gamers try to burn through a Sierra adventure as soon as they get one home. Don't attempt this at your home. Sierra games take quite a few hours to get through even if you already know what to do, so don't frustrate yourself.

Besides, this isn't a text adventure, it's a Sierra game. Take time to admire the view.

2. IF YOU ABSOLUTELY NEED A HINT NOW, PURCHASE A HINT BOOK

At only \$7.95 suggested retail, Sierra hint books cost much less than a call to Coarsegold, California from most areas of the country, and hint books can add to the fun. All the major software stores, and most quality stores, carry Sierra's line of hint books. If you don't see them on the shelf, ask your dealer to order one for you!

3. IF YOU CAN WAIT FOR A HINT, WRITE US A POSTCARD

Sierra answers tens of thousands of hint request letters each year, and we stay on top of them so you don't have to wait long for your answer. Address your letter to Sierra Customer Support Department, P.O. Box 485, Coarsegold, CA 93614. Put the question on a postcard if possible, and be sure to include your return address.

See Hotline page 19

Roberta Williams on the New King Quest

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QB: What does the term "interactive fiction" mean to you?

Williams: Well, if you take fiction in its literal terms, a story that's not true, and interactive means you can control it, communicate with it, alter it, you can get feedback from it-solve-it that's interactive fiction, that's an adventure. And that's the thing I like to do, tell stories. I just love that. I like to come up with stories and characters, and I'm really trying to do more to develop the characters' personalities, like you would in a traditional story. Before a few years ago, characters in a game were so flat, you know: "Here's a troll," or whatever. So I'm trying to improve my storytelling style to give the characters and story more dimension, hopefully in a way that will draw people into it.

QB: How are you doing that in King's Quest IV?

Williams: A lot of it comes from how the characters are represented on-screen. In the past, many of our characters have been very flat, not just in what they say but in how they are represented in terms of walking around...you know, they just kind of walk. But in King's Quest IV there will be a lot more movement, more animation and, as our animator likes to say, "body language"--more realistic movement that has to do with their personalities. We can almost get facial expressions using the new

resolution...maybe not complete facial expressions, but at least enough so you'll know how the character feels. That's one way. Another way is in the use of sound effects and music to get certain feelings.

I think in a way that what we're doing is still being invented, and each time we do one of these it progresses and we learn new things. I'm sure that what we'll see five years from now will be much more balanced, because we're still trying to learn



Many strange and unusual places await your arrival.

how to develop characters and give them



Explore the countryside carefully.
personality and make the story more interesting so it will draw the reader or viewer



Encounter characters from ancient folklore and legend.

or whatever you want to call them into it, so they feel they're really part of the story. That's what I'm trying to do.

QB: What do you see for adventures five years from now?

Williams: A lot depends on the hardware, and a lot depends on our storytelling skills and the software tools we have available that, with the hardware, gives these characters life. But the thing that kind of gets in the way here is CDI, because we don't quite know what that's going to do. I know somewhere down the line I'll do something for CDI, but I consider it separate from this (computer adventure games)...I don't know if they'll try to integrate them, or one will fizzle out and the other succeed.

QB: What's the main difference?

Williams: With CDI, the game would be on a compact disc. You wouldn't use a computer at all. It would be a compact disc player attached to your TV set.

QB: Would you type in commands and so on?

Williams: There is supposed to be a keyboard you could get, but it will be very expensive and most people probably won't get one. The whole concept behind CDI is that it's for the average non-computer type person--there are still a lot of people who don't understand computers and don't want to have anything to do with them. But they can set their VCRs and run a camcorder. They can do that. So CDI is supposed to be for them.

You put in the compact disc and up on the screen, you'll see...well, it can be anything from motion pictures, digitized graphics and animation, whatever you want. And you'll hear computer sounds, or music just like what you'd hear on a Phil Collins album. When people talk, it would sound just like what you hear in movies or TV shows.

But it is interactive--sort of. You can do

See Roberta Williams page 20





SIERRA

THE PHENOMENON CONTINUES.

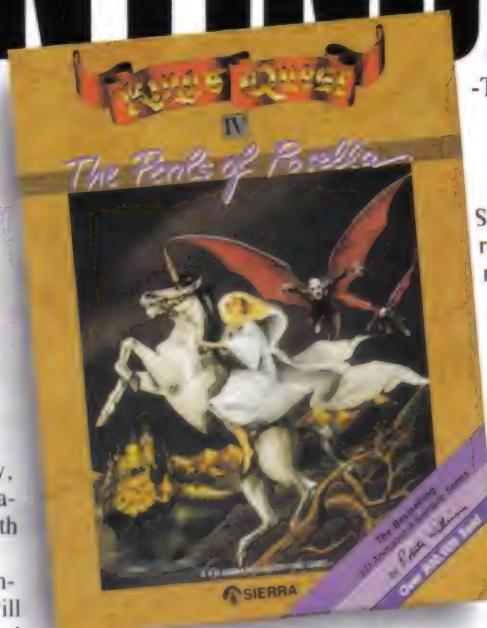
-The Signal Research Report

Breaking the million copy barrier...that's the crowning point of a truly one-of-a-kind computer game. King's Quest, the ultimate graphic adventure series, heralds this upcoming milestone with the triumphant arrival of

King's Quest IV - The Perils of Rosella

Interactive fun for the whole family, King's Quest IV bridges the generation gap between young and old with its classic fantasy themes, vivid characterizations, and dramatic conflicts. Parents and children alike will be delighted as they become the lead character in a dramatic medieval fairy tale.

The crown jewel of computer adventuring, King's Quest IV offers \$500,000 in improvements to a multi-million dollar proprietary software development system, creating an entertainment experience far exceeding everyone's greatest expectations. A team of 13 programmers, developers and artists with over 11 man-years of work have produced the largest computer game in history, a whopping 5.5 megabytes of program code.



Stunning graphics with double the resolution of previous versions, realistic day and night cycles, and enhanced animation offer the closest thing yet to a living motion picture on your computer screen.

A theatrical experience for your personal computer, King's Quest IV offers a musical score unprecedented in computer entertainment software, a full 40 minutes of original music as composed by William Goldstein, a well-known Hollywood composer.

Sierra tops it off with the magnum opus in computer game animation, a 10 minute full-length introductory cartoon that sets the stage for a climactic contest between good and evil. Prepare to test the power of your brain and your computer to the hilt with the most phenomenal adventure game in computer entertainment history.

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Hotline

continued from page 14

4. IF YOU MUST CALL SIERRA, TRY TO CALL IN THE EVENING

During the day, telephone traffic is heavy due to business phone calls. Your call will fight not only with others coming into the Sierra switchboard, but calls coming into the area for other businesses in town. Phone lines will likely be clogged most of the day. Sierra's published hours for this period will be 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (PST) on Monday through Friday, but don't be afraid to try us on weekends and after hours. If traffic is bad, we may keep the lines open for extended hours.

5. ASK YOUR DEALER OR COMPUTER OWNING FRIENDS FOR A HINT

There's no guarantee that any of these people will help you find the passport in *Leisure Suit Larry II*, or the killer in *Manhunter*, but if they own the game, they'll probably be proud to help you.

OTHER SOURCES FOR SIERRA HINTS:

The following are commercial sources other than Sierra where you might find hints on Sierra game products.

Questbusters Journal, P.O. Box 32698, Tucson, AZ 85751. Carries regular hints and "walk thrus" on popular adventure games.

CompuServe (contact your dealer for details). The Games Forum on CompuServe is a fantastic place to get Sierra adventure hints (many of Sierra's beta testers "hang out" in the on-line conference area). If you subscribe to CompuServe, you can get Sierra hints "on-line."

The Official Book of King's Quest, Compute! Books (available at better bookstores everywhere). This well-written book not only gives hints to all the installments of the popular King's Quest series, it gives an interesting and insightful account of the making of the series and the people behind it. This is likely to be the only published source of King's Quest hints until well after Christmas.

Rumor Mill

continued from page 3

the Silicon Gulch as **Dave, Barry and Dee Dee Murry present Manhunter: San Francisco**.

The designers promise more of the action/adventure/horror mixture presented in the original *Manhunter*, but apologize in advance for the fate they'll deliver to the famous Golden Gate Bridge. According to Dave Murry, "...the bridges are the links from San Francisco to the rest of the world, which is something the orbs would never put up with. We'll have to disable them somehow - and it's liable to be pretty gruesome." Look for the new *Manhunter* around August...

Expect more to come from **Al Lowe**, designer of *Leisure Suit Larry* and *Leisure Suit Larry II*. *Leisure Suit Larry*, Al Lowe's most famous creation, lives on in *Leisure Suit Larry's Party Games*. It's not an adventure game, but it will be 3-D and very animated...

Retired-Officer Jim Walls is taking off his uniform, and trying his hand at undercover work in **Operation Code Name: Ice Man**, a new spy thriller about high-tech weapons and high-tech crime. This is Jim's first adventure game that isn't biographical (Jim has never been a spy), but he is getting expert help with the design. Look for *Ice Man* in late summer or early fall.

Murder on the Southern Quarter (working title) is a new "co-managed" production between adventure designer **Roberta Williams** and television screenwriter **Jackie Austin**. Roberta and

Jackie have been investigating the concept since February, when they met in New Orleans to discuss the concept. According to Roberta, "This will be a period piece, set in the age of flappers and 'illegal booze'. The graphics are going to have "the look" of the period and really set the tone for the game." ...

Other Sierra titles for 1989 include three more adventure games, a new word processor, and perhaps the strangest addition to Sierra's product line yet, a self-help product on **"How to Win in the Work Place."**

"How To Win in the Work Place" is a pet project of **John Williams**, Sierra's Marketing Director. According to John, "I started as the marketing manager at Sierra when I was 18 and fresh out of high school. If it wasn't for self-help instruction, I wouldn't have the job I have today." John is quick to point out that he will not write the series himself. "Only a truly great therapist can do self-help therapy"..... The new product will be designed and produced by **Jesse Ivanhoe**.

Finally, the first of Sierra's new releases in 1989 will be **Hoyle's Book of Cards**. Hoyle's is the first new design by **Warren Schwader** in over four years. Veteran Apple owners will remember Warren from his early classics **Threshold** and **Sammy Lightfoot**.

That's it for "Heard It In the Hallway" for now. Look for more hot rumors in future issues.

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RECEIVE A FREE HINT BOOK OF YOUR CHOICE WHEN YOU BUY EITHER SPACE QUEST I OR THE BLACK CAULDRON

To redeem, fill out this coupon completely and enclose with dated receipt for the purchase of either Sierra 3-D Animated Adventure Game named above.

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Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Where purchased (or product desired) _____

Hint book desired _____

Void where taxed, restricted or prohibited by law. Offer valid on products purchased between Nov. 1, 1988 and March 31, 1989.

Coupons sent for redemption must be postmarked no later than April 30, 1989. Only one coupon redeemable per household.

Roberta Williams

continued from page 15

things to it, but it's real limited. The keyboard isn't really thought of as part of it. They're thinking in terms of a joystick or a pointer that you would use to point and click to say where you want to go, and then the characters would walk around, and that would look just like a movie. Kinda like Black Cauldron, where you click buttons. But you can use real pictures, we can even use real people if we want to. Or Disney-style animation, or anything you want.

QB: How far away is this?

Williams: It's happening now. We haven't actually decided anything yet. But I know that down the line it will occur. I'm just not sure how that fits in and how--or even if--it's going to work. So it will be more like movie-making at that point, with well orchestrated music and people really talking--there will probably be no text at all. Instead of a message window popping up saying "You are in the forest," we'll have a narrator say it. When you talk to characters, they'll actually speak, and each will have his or her own voice. So when you ask me what's down the line five years from now, I don't really know.

QB: But we know what's down the line...

Williams: One year, maybe (laughs).

QB: Like the subtitle of King's Quest IV, maybe?

Williams: The Perils of Rosella, for lack of anything better. It was sort of based on The Perils of Pauline. King's Quest IV has a heroine, and that's semi-experimental. I know it will be just fine with the women and girls who play the game, but how it will go over with some of the men, I don't know.

QB: I understand Infocom got a good response to Plundered Hearts, which has a female character. Our reviewer (William Carte) said that after he got into the game, he forgot all about it and it didn't matter that his character was a woman.

Williams: That's what I figured. It bothered me when I first started designing this one. We call our main character "Ego." In every game it's Ego, and that refers to the character we're writing around: we just

say "Ego does this, Ego does that." So we've always called Ego "he" or him. But all of a sudden I've got a girl "Ego," and it was real strange at first. I had a real hard time calling Ego a "her" (laughs). "Her? She? She does this? She does that?" I've been working with this for a long time, about eight months [this interview took place in January], and now it's just fine. It's even natural. The only thing that's kinda strange is that I have a lot of deaths in my games: my characters always die from falling or being thrown into a cauldron or something. And I always like to have them die in a funny way. It didn't seem right. I don't know why. I guess it's because she's a girl, and you don't think a girl should be treated that way (laughs). But I got used to that too, until there was one death I had to deal with last week that I was real uncomfortable with. Was it throwing her in the cauldron? I'm not sure, but it was some death that seemed particularly unfeminine, not right.

QB: Trampled by stampeding ogres?

Williams: Oh, she gets dragged off by her braids, lots of deaths. And girls die differently. I discovered a lot of these things, like the way she falls, which has to be different from the way a guy falls. It's been an experience. And I think that men will find it fun and different, because it's from a different point of view.

QB: Are any of the puzzles based on the character's sex?

Williams: No, not really. Because that would be going too far. And personally, I think basically people are people and (laughs) there are only a couple of things that only men or women can do, when you come right down to it. So I think that whether you can solve this or that has nothing to do with being a man or woman. Except well, I'll take that back a little bit. I have gone away from...my characters don't really use weapons.

When I first started writing adventures, my characters just used weapons a little. More and more it has moved away from that, toward using your brain to solve the problem, using your wits or logic or whatever. And Rosella absolutely does not use weapons. So in that way she's very non-violent.

QB: No killing trolls in this one?

Williams: I take that back. You do kill something but you do it in a very nice way. Unintentional, really. You accidentally kill somebody.

QB: And what's the story all about?

Williams: Since so much of the fun is in the act of discovery, I'd rather not go into the story other than what's in the catalog [as Rosella, you must solve multiple quests, the long-range goal being to find an enchanted fruit that will save your father, the King]. But I can tell you about some of the new features. The resolution of the graphics will be doubled to 320 x 200. We never had this before because we try to make our games available for as many different computers as possible.

For something to run on both an Apple and an Amiga, we've had to use graphics that were really stretching the Apple but were not stretching the capabilities of the Amiga. We're moving away from that. We're doing two versions of King's Quest IV, one in the old style of graphics for the Apple, PCjr and maybe the Tandy 1000, I'm not sure. And we're doing another one for the higher resolution computers. So we'll be upgrading our graphics and making them a little more computer-specific than in the past.

With double the resolution, you won't have so much of that choppiness you see in the lower resolution. Like the staircase effect in the diagonal lines. You still have a little bit of that in the double resolution, but it's much, much smoother. And the pixels are smaller, so we can get more detail in the face.

I went out and got two very good computer artists to work on this game. One is concentrating just on the backgrounds, and the other is concentrating on animation. Before, we used the same artists. And it kind of bothered me at first to use two different ones, because I felt the animation was so much a part of the background, that how could two separate artists make sure it was all integrated? But it's worked out, since the person doing the animation thinks only about that so the animation is fantastic, and we've got a lot of it. The same with the guy doing the background. He doesn't have to worry about the animation, so he

can spend a lot more time on detail in the background. I act as intermediary between them, making sure that the art is integrated properly.

QB: Did either one work on previous King's Quests?

Williams: No. In fact, they're brand new to our company. I did endeavor to make the artistic style as similar as possible, because it has to look and feel like a King's Quest. Using different artists concerns me a lot, but when we actually started doing it, working with the artists, it was strange; I saw how much I affect how the pictures turn out, how the graphics are so much a representation of how I feel and how I think it should look, as opposed to the artist. So they came out remarkably similar. And it's hard to explain, but it just turned out that way. The feeling of the game, its theme, how it plays, is the game.

QB: How big is the game?

Williams: A little bigger, but not much. I go by rooms, and a room to me is a screen, where you're at. We just started calling them rooms, I don't know why. King's Quest I had about 80 rooms. The second game had 92. King's Quest III had about 104, and King's Quest IV has about 95. But it actually has more because we have night scenes in the game. It's a timed game that takes place over a 24-hour period, so you roam around during the day and eventually it turns to night. So the graphics for each room were redrawn for the night scenes, and you'll come across different characters at night. It's spookier.

In fact, I want to do a ghost story next. I'm not doing King's Quest V next. I have to let people know I can do something else, expand my horizons. You get yourself stuck in a niche. It's been a year-and-a-half since King's Quest III, and I deliberately held back from putting one out this past Christmas because then...it's like "here's another one, and another one." You've got to give it time in between, otherwise you hurt it.

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October 6, 1988

SIERRA ON-LINE, INC. ANNOUNCES ITS INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING OF COMMON STOCK

On October 6, 1988, Sierra On-Line, Inc., a developer and publisher of entertainment software products, announced its initial public offering of 1,400,000 shares of Common Stock. The offering price was \$9.00 per share. Of the total, 980,000 shares were sold by the Company and 420,000 shares were sold by selling stockholders. The Company intends to use the net proceeds, as needed, for general purposes, including working capital and product development, and for possible acquisitions of businesses that would complement the Company's business.

priced interactive animated adventures, simulations and other microcomputer entertainment software products for the high end of the consumer market. The Company's products feature high-quality graphics, music and sound effects that are designed primarily for IBM PCs, IBM PC-compatibles, and computers manufactured by Apple Computer, Inc. Final prospectuses may be obtained from Piper, Jaffray and Hopwood, Incorporated, 222 South 9th Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 and Oppenheimer & Co., Inc., 2029 Century Park East, Suite 3550, Los Angeles, California 90067.

Sierra develops and publishes premium-

Sierra Mail Bag

To Sierra,

Hello, I'm just writing to say how much I enjoyed your game, King's Quest II. I just recently bought an Apple IIGS with the color RGB Monitor, and an ImageWriter II, (etc.) and, King's Quest II was the first program I bought. (Actually, I got it for my birthday, but hey, I had to pressure my parents to get it for me. Oh, I'm now 15.) I solved it not long ago, and it truly is a step up from any game I've ever played before. I simply loved every part of it - the great graphics, the animation, the music and sound effects and, the story. The predecessor of my Apple IIGS, (which I think is the best home computer) was an old Apple II+. And, I have played Mystery House and Sammy Lightfoot, too. (I didn't realize the same people that made those made King's Quest.) Naturally, I'm delighted to see how much you've improved, and you're definitely leading the rest in this new field of games and programs.

I just thought I'd write to let you know what a great job you're doing. You certainly are the best at this. Instead of getting letters which are complaining about this and that, hopefully this letter will make your day - although, I am sure you get several letters such as this one a day. But, keep up the great work. [I'm working on my parents to buy the other three King's Quests (and perhaps, Leisure Suit Larry, Police Quest and/or Space Quest) and I will continue playing your games. You've got more than one fan out there.

Sincerely,

Scott Smith

Columbia, MD

P.S. As you can see, I do love this computer almost as much as I love your games. I hope you like the color, I know I do. The ImageWriter II is a fascinating printer.

Dear Sirs,

Enclosed are the 3.5" Apple IIGS disks for Leisure Suit Larry. When the game tried to start, it was unable and reported: "Disk error #64." After repeated attempts to start the game (with the same disk error message), I called your Customer Support line

at 209-683-6858. I explained all the above to the gal who answered the phone. Her answer was to send in the disk and you would check it out and replace it, if necessary.

As you can see from the warranty card enclosed, these are new disks, never before used by me. I am a bit unhappy with the fact that a new product is damaged and the best I can do is send it in for a replacement.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Mahaffey

Minot, MD

Editor's Note: We maintain strict quality control in our disk production facility, but sometimes a faulty disk may slip through, or a disk may be damaged after we ship it. In any case, all of our products are covered by a 90-day warranty, which provides for free replacements of damaged or faulty disks.

Dear Sirs,

I bought Leisure Suit Larry a couple of weeks ago, and have just managed to solve the game.

I am a relative newcomer to computers, and much newer to computer games, but even without much of a base for comparison, I can tell you that I have enjoyed Larry to the maximum.

I'm not about to pay \$7.95 for the hint book to find out what the 19 points are that I missed, but I am dying to know if the pocket lint was really useful.

I hope to see bigger, better, and more adventures with Larry.

Thanks for a great game,

Harley F. Hann

Buhl, ID

Dear Sierra,

Y'all deserve a pat on the back for the outstanding accomplishments on Sierra's BBS. I accessed your BBS, and was overwhelmed by the many things to do with no

charge, which is great for us long distance callers. The library was full of information that you can actually download! There is a poll where you can earn extra credits, and the telecommunication line is a blast. We had five other people on one line, and a sysop that was more than helpful.

Keep up the good work Sierra.

David Watkins

Fernandina, FL

Dear Sirs,

If I write you, it's because I've taken the decision to congratulate Sierra for its works for Apple IIGS. These games have got three principal qualities: first is originality, second is efficacy, and third is ingenuity. Don't forget humor (I'm thinking about Leisure Suit Larry!).

You are a light of hope for IIGS, because in France this computer is superior and above all its capacities are better if I refer to an Amiga or an Atari.

Thanks for your products.

Long live Sierra, long live Apple. Don't forget (even here) there are fans! Good luck!

Dear Sierra,

My sons Brad, Reed and I really appreciate the time you took to give us a tour of Sierra On-Line last Tuesday.

We anticipate the release of King's Quest IV this fall and if you haven't realized it by now, we are part of the population of your locked-in customers.

Sincerely,

David T. Macomber

Editor's note: If you are ever in the Oakhurst, California area (just south of Yosemite National Park), look us up and stop by for a visit.

Dear Sirs,

Sorry, but I must send this letter of complaint about the latest adventure I completed, Space Quest.

When, in the game, I landed and got out

to examine the damaged pod, I got the response that the "pod was badly damaged." I went to all four sides of the pod and repeated the question, and got the same answer. So what is the careful adventurer to think, but there is nothing here. How wrong. You must be standing on the front right corner of the pod in order to find the piece of broken glass. I cry "not fair."

Also, I was stumped for weeks because I simply did not stumble into the Orat's cave. It does not look like a cave from the outside, but looks like the rest of the hunk of rock.

I really enjoyed the adventure, but felt like I could have solved the adventure weeks sooner and without the added expense of a hint book if the obstacles were more reasonable.

Kind regards,

Jim Lawley

Dear Ken and Roberta Williams,

I am probably one of your biggest fans. I have all of the following games made by you: King's Quest (I, II III), Space Quest I and II, Black Cauldron, Police Quest, Thexder, Championship Boxing and Helicopter Simulator. My mom still owes me King's Quest IV for a Hanukkah present. I am dying to get Police Quest II, Manhunter: New York and Silpheed. I have solved all of the 3-D Animated Adventure Games I have. I hope you go on to King's Quest 1000!

When I started these games, I had no idea how to read and write (I was only four). Now I am the best reader in my class. If you didn't come out with these games I wouldn't be so good at reading and writing.

I really like fairy tales, so that's why I like the King's Quest series. I like your ideas of other games like Police Quest and Black Cauldron. I like Black Cauldron so much that whenever I go to a video rental store I ask if they have the Disney movie. Unfortunately they always say no.

I like the part in King's Quest III when you go into the three bears' garden and Mama Bear is working in the garden and she kicks you all the way to the next scene! In King's Quest II I like the part when

Count Dracula comes out of his coffin. I like the part in Space Quest I when you go into the bar. I like the part in Space Quest II when you swing on the vine like Tarzan.

I hope you can make sports games. I know they would be really good made by you!

Sincerely,

David Varet

Riverdale, New York

Dear Jerry,

I greatly enjoy your newsletter and enjoy the Sierra software. I have played King's Quest and Space Quest for hours and next week I'll be playing Thexder if my computer store gets it.

Love all your articles. Please congratulate all workers on this newsletter and all other issues.

Gordon Bowie

Greenbrier, AR

P.S. I wish you success on all your IIGS software. My IIGS awaits more software for its special talents.

Dear Sir:

I've been wanting to write you for almost two months about your program "Space Quest, Chapter I, The Sarien Encounter."

It's great, good, the best, and any other words you want to use.

The graphics are good and humorous.

The overall plot is good.

The story was a challenge to finish, but I was able to finish it without buying a hint book. I think this is very important. So many adventures today have one or two puzzles that are almost impossible to solve. I was stumped a few times in yours but there was always a solution at hand.

The sound was very good and supported the story line.

The multiple ways to solve problems was great. (I first killed the spider probe by

dropping a rock on it. I didn't know about the monster that lived in the cave. Later, when I found out about the monster, I knew I had to repeat that part of the game.)

I think you need to stress the point to "save the game" often. After dying over and over again at various times I was almost ready to forget the game. But, because other parts of the game were so interesting, I kept going and learned the "save game" lesson the hard way.

I have a problem with Space Quest II. It's down at the store now! It's been there for weeks. I haven't bought it. Could it be as great as Space Quest I? Could a company produce two great hits in a row? (Past experience with computer games says no!) Would I have to break down and buy a hint book? All these questions also apply to Leisure Suit Larry.

Oh well, thanks for a great game, and thanks for supporting the Atari folks.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Arrington

New York City, NY

Editor's Note: Other fans have given a "thumbs up" to Space Quest II, because it has been a smash success. Also, watch for Space Quest III and Leisure Suit Larry II.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 1987 I bought an IBM-compatible PC to write down my examination for a diploma to get the certified engineer. I never wanted to play any fighting games on my PC, because the stupid "bum, bum, crash, tudeldy - piep" make me nervous. Three months ago a friend of mine bought your King's Quest game and I said to my friend: "You've seen one video game, you've seen them all!"

Now, after finishing King's Quest I and King's Quest II by myself and - with black shadows under my eyes - finishing Space Quest I in 52 hours and 23 minutes - I say thank you for your 3-D animated adventures!

Sincerely,

Holger Jordan

Drawing Dynamos Discovered!

We are pleased to announce the winners of the latest Sierra Drawing Contest. The prize winners are: Peter Kuang of Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, Bobby Mikuchonis of Belton, Texas, and Joseph Christopher Anthony Pauzie of Jakarta, Indonesia.

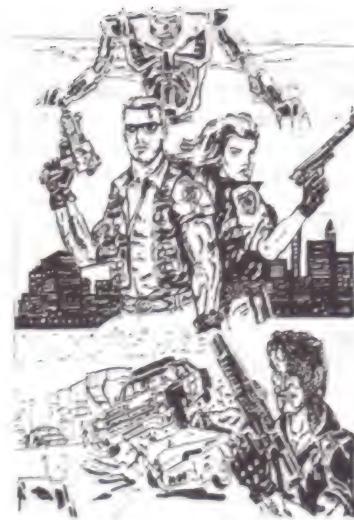
Sierra's Drawing Contest is an ongoing event, so send in your submissions now! Winning entries will receive the Sierra product of their choice, and their drawing

will be published in the newsletter. The number of winners will depend on the quality of the entries.

Drawings must be in black ink (not in pencil or in color) on white unlined paper (please do not fold drawings). Each drawing should relate to one or more of Sierra's products. All submissions become the property of Sierra On-Line, Inc.



Bobby Mikuchonis



Joseph Christopher Anthony Pauzie



Peter Kuang

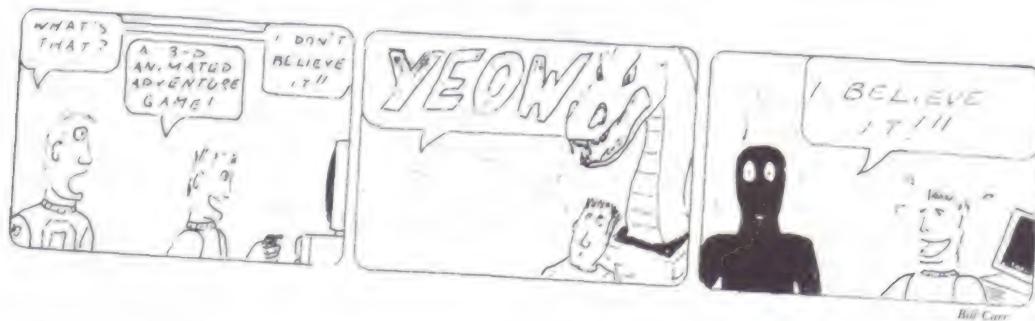
Corny Cartoons Captured!

We are pleased to announce the winners of the latest Cartoon contest. The prize winners are: Bill Carr of Clovis, New Mexico and Kent Lee of Flushing, New York.

Sierra's Cartoon contest is an ongoing event, so send in your submissions now! Winning entries will receive the Sierra product of their choice, and their cartoon

will be published in the newsletter. The number of winners will depend on the quality of the entries.

Cartoon entries must be in black ink (not in pencil or in color) on white unlined paper (please do not fold cartoons). Each cartoon should relate to one or more of Sierra's products. All submissions become the property of Sierra On-Line, Inc.



Bill Carr



Kent Lee



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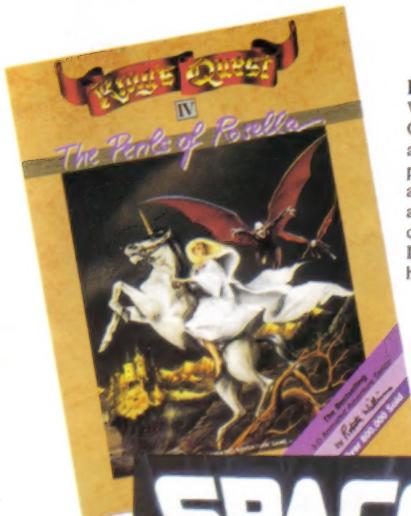

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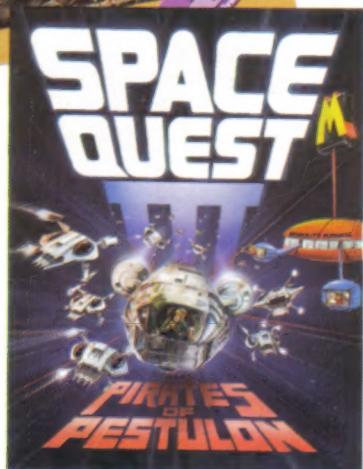
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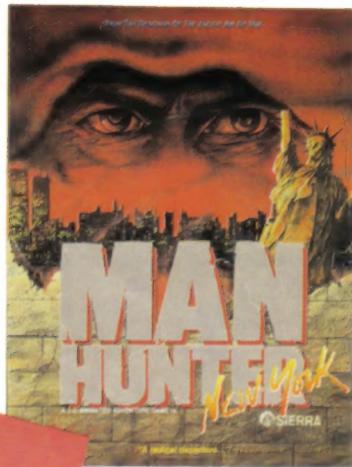
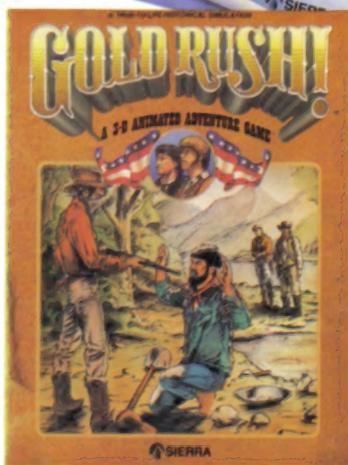
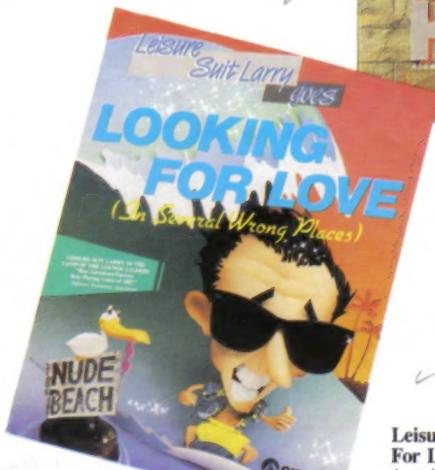
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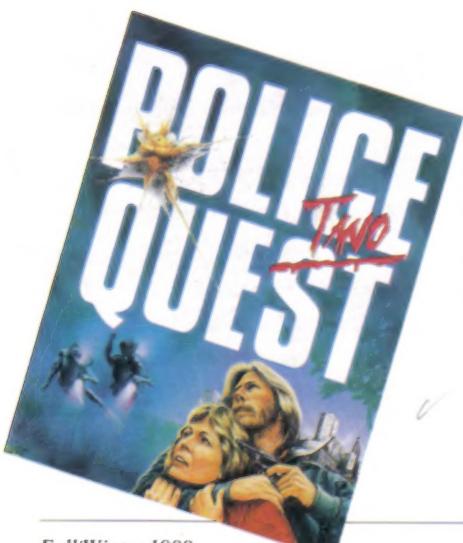
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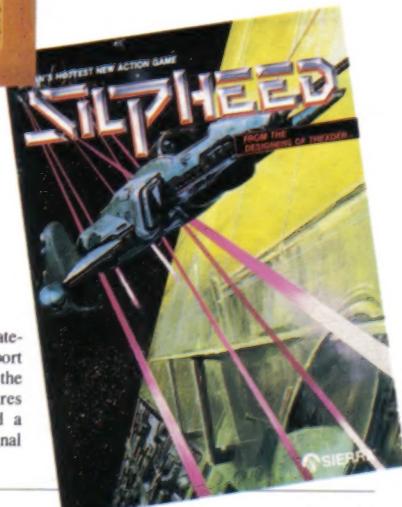


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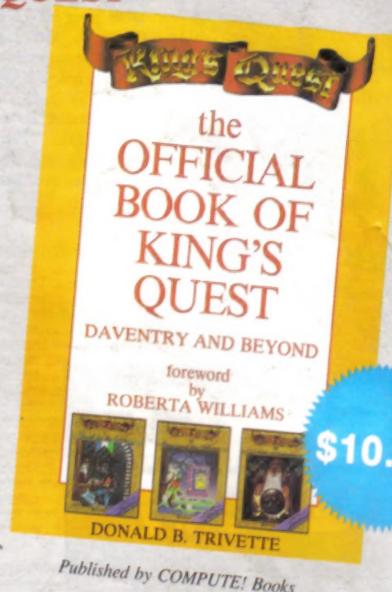
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